



**Mennonite
Central
Committee**

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Perspectives on Food and Hunger From MCC Friends and Partners around the World

From North America:

The real effect of poverty is long term. You slowly wear out your clothes, you put off getting a hair-cut, the unvaried diet makes you pasty and any emergency need for funds is a problem. Your morale comes under pressure as well and after months of failing to get jobs (I was turned down once for McDonalds in the early 90s) despair kicks in. I have found it a truism that would be employers don't like the whiff of desperation. If you say you'll do anything and sound like you mean it, no one will give you anything. (And lest you are inclined to think I am, or was, a slacker, I have worked at everything from picking up rocks on a farm, store setup, painting, moving and yard work to typing). It's not so hard to live in poverty for a brief period, or so long as hope holds up. It's when it looks like a long grey future that it drains all color from your life. (Ian Welsh).

From Congo:

MCC supports local initiatives to find solutions to hunger. In Kikwit, Congo, a women's group tends crops together on a cooperatively-farmed plot, supplementing their individual fields. "When we farm together, it increases our knowledge," says member Alphonsine Kafutshi. "We share techniques for growing more food." (MCC)

From North America:

Friday, I had grits and toast for breakfast, crackers and a banana for lunch and two hamburgers from White Castle (\$.51 apiece) for dinner. On Saturday, I skipped breakfast.

Having had this experience I can see how people forced to eat on such a budget could develop health problems, but I am certain that the stress of worrying about how to afford to eat is part of it. I have no problem imagining that people on food stamps could get high blood pressure just worrying about how to budget their food expenses.

(U.S. Congresswoman Barbara Lee took the "Food Stamp Challenge," living on a typical food stamp budget of just \$3 a day. Read her blog at foodstampchallenge.typepad.com).

From Pakistan:

"Sometimes I feel like I am invisible. People see me, but they don't want to see me and so they look through me before they look at me. I wish they would just look at me. (From the Canadian Foodgrains Bank).